



## CAMPUS MINISTRIES

# WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

**Overview:** The exchange of wedding vows is a visible sign of God's presence and love in the world in general and the parish community in particular. It is, therefore, the basic practice of the Catholic community that those who celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony normally do so in the same place where they are regularly celebrating the sacrament of Eucharist – their regular parish setting. Because of the nature of the University community and the ties which may have developed between individuals while students and the University, alumni may wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage on campus. Only University of Scranton alumni can ask to celebrate matrimony in the University chapel. *Only* Catholic wedding ceremonies can take place and *only* in Madonna Della Strada Chapel. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the services of a priest or deacon to officiate at the wedding ceremony. All that is allowed to occur here is normed by the Diocese of Scranton.

**A couple does not celebrate the sacrament of matrimony at The University of Scranton independent of their relationship with a local or home parish community.** In other words, any couple desiring to be married in the chapel at The University of Scranton must be registered in a local or home parish. And please know, anyone celebrating matrimony at The University of Scranton will have to request and receive a letter of permission to do so from their local or home pastor. Pre-Cana preparation and all paperwork for the ceremony must be done in and through one's home parish and filed with the Office of Campus Ministries four to six months before the ceremony.

Like any organization, the Church is able to maintain stability and good order by observing certain guidelines. These processes, established by the Church, indicate how seriously the Church views the need for sufficient preparation for marriage. Therefore, the following documents must be gathered and sent in a complete packet to the Office of Campus Ministries. Please do not send documents individually. **ORIGINAL documents are required, and sacramental certificates should have the RAISED SEAL of the parish.**

## CHECK-OFF LIST for:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of bride* (please print) *Name of groom* (please print)

1. \_\_\_ Letter/email to the Director of Liturgy and Music at The University of Scranton requesting permission to celebrate the sacrament of marriage in Madonna Della Strada Chapel; letter/email is to include:
  - a. \_\_\_ The desired date of the celebration (a date for the wedding rehearsal will be determined at a later time in consultation with the presider)
  - b. \_\_\_ The desired time for the **start** of the wedding ceremony (the chapel will be reserved for a 2-hour time frame, beginning 30 minutes prior to the start of the wedding)
  - c. \_\_\_ Name and diocese of the presiding priest or deacon (the priest or deacon will have to request delegation from the Bishop of Scranton; if from outside the Scranton diocese, a testimonial letter from the celebrant's bishop or superior will have to be sent to the Bishop of Scranton by the presiding priest/deacon, and sent to the Office of Campus Ministries. This letter will be submitted with the rest of the paperwork for this marriage by Campus Ministries.)
  - d. \_\_\_ Name of the presiding priest or deacon
2. \_\_\_ Letter from the local or proper pastor granting permission to celebrate the sacrament of marriage outside the couple's local parish at The University of Scranton.
3. \_\_\_ Sacramental records/certificates with raised seal for the **bride** from the parish where she received these sacraments:
  - a. \_\_\_ baptism
  - b. \_\_\_ first communion
  - c. \_\_\_ confirmation
4. \_\_\_ Sacramental records/certificates with raised seal for the **groom** from the parish where he received these sacraments:
  - a. \_\_\_ baptism
  - b. \_\_\_ first communion
  - c. \_\_\_ confirmation
5. \_\_\_ Letter of freedom to marry for the **bride**.
6. \_\_\_ Letter of freedom to marry for the **groom**.
7. \_\_\_ Marriage application (also called a pre-nuptial investigation) **completed with your local pastor** (*if any impediment exists, the local pastor must apply for necessary dispensations or permissions, which then must be submitted to The University of Scranton's Office of Campus Ministries*)
8. \_\_\_ Certificate indicating the couple has completed a Pre-Cana program

### Optional

\_\_\_ Completion of the FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory is strongly encouraged. <http://www.foccusinc.com/>

**N.B: At the risk of losing Madonna Della Strada Chapel as the site of your marriage ceremony, and to allow sufficient time for the paperwork to be processed at the Scranton Diocesan offices, all paperwork must be in The University of Scranton's Office of Campus Ministries 4 (four) months prior to your selected wedding date.**

## **POLICY**

Since the University is not a parish, a very limited number of weddings occur at Madonna Della Strada Chapel. **Therefore, weddings can be witnessed at Madonna Della Strada chapel only within the guidelines established by the Office of Canonical Processes of the Diocese of Scranton and one's local or home pastor with the agreement of the University's Executive Director of Campus Ministries.**

*Please note:* No final plans should be made until all paperwork is completed and filed with the Office of Campus Ministries at The University of Scranton. Weddings may only be scheduled outside times of ordinary chapel use and when University personnel are available.

## **PREPARATION**

### **Discernment**

Spending time with the United States Bishops' "For Your Marriage" website is strongly encouraged: <http://foryourmarriage.org/>.

### **Pre-Marital Investigation Guidelines**

It is the couple's responsibility to complete the checklist on pages 1 and 2 of these instructions. It is best to contact Campus Ministries one year before the planned wedding date in order to begin the process in a timely manner.

### **Readings and Wedding Vows**

Scripture readings for the ceremony are to be selected in consultation with the deacon/priest presiding at your ceremony. Non-Scriptural passages are never used during the ceremony (i.e., poems, secular writings, etc.) There are two options for wedding vows the couple can select, again in consultation with your presiding minister. Vows from other sources or those written by the bride and groom are not permitted in Catholic wedding ceremonies. All other aspects of the liturgy/ceremony (e.g., Prayers of the Faithful, readers, Presentation of the Bread and Wine, etc.) are to be decided upon in consultation with the deacon/priest presiding at your ceremony.

### **Music**

Everything about the wedding ceremony witnesses to all those present your understanding that you are entering a sacred and holy union - a sacrament. Therefore, everything about the service, including the music, calls for careful planning that will contribute to this understanding. Because you have chosen to invite Christ to make your love a sacrament, the music you choose for your wedding must express this unique and distinct encounter. However personally meaningful some music may be to the couple, the principle that governs its sacredness and consequent acceptability is this religious aspect of the wedding as distinct from the social reception for family and friends. Therefore, there may be a particular meaningful song which may not be sung at the liturgy itself, but might better be used at the reception. Since Christian marriage is a sacrament and is guided by the Church's understanding and norms for liturgy, it is essential that the couple review musician arrangements and musical selections with the Director of Liturgy and Music.

### **Fee**

The Chapel fee for marriage ceremonies in Madonna Della Strada is \$1,000, from which a stipend will be furnished to the sacristans, the accompanist, the cantor, and other needed personnel. ***Please Note:* The chapel fee does not include the customary stipend offered to musicians other than the accompanist and cantor, the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding, and other persons involved with the wedding.** It is the responsibility of the couple to compensate others at their discretion. The Chapel fee should be sent to our office at least two months prior to the wedding (please make check out to The University of Scranton; we cannot accept credit card payments or electronic transfers.) The Chapel fee should be returned with the last page of this document.

## Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is a crucial aspect of your wedding plans. Please arrange the wedding rehearsal time outside the hours of scheduled chapel use ***with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding*** and inform our office of the requested date/time of the rehearsal, as well as who will be directing the rehearsal, in order for us to check availability and to secure the space. The chapel will be reserved for a 45-minute timeframe for your rehearsal. Please make sure to bring the civil marriage license to the rehearsal for the deacon/priest.

## Plan Well

It is important that the rehearsal – as well as the wedding ceremony – start on time. The Chapel is often reserved for other events and may not be available if events start late. Additionally, late starts may mean that personnel hired for the rehearsal and/or ceremony may not be available past the allotted time frames.

## REGULATIONS

1. Weddings and rehearsals will be scheduled according to University Chapel availability.
2. Flowers are the responsibility of the couple. It is recommended that a flower arrangement be placed immediately in front of the ambo (pulpit). A modest arrangement may also be placed near the altar. Florists must provide their own flower stands. In accordance with Church directives, no flowers should be placed on the altar of celebration (altar table).
3. The liturgical environment of the chapel should be respected and maintained at all times. This precludes any replacement of furniture or setting up large decorations. Chapel furniture cannot be removed, shifted, or rearranged.
4. No notices, posters, flowers, or decorations may be affixed by any method to any walls, pews, chairs, fixtures, or furniture. Please do not use nails, thumb tacks or tape on any surface in the Chapel, especially on wood surfaces or on chairs.
5. We ask that the Chapel be returned to its proper order. All programs, runners, song sheets, or worship aids are to be collected by those using the Chapel. Hymnals are to be returned to their proper place.
6. Candles are prohibited for use by guests or as decorations. The only candles permitted are those on the altar and a Unity Candle, if applicable.
7. Balloons are strictly prohibited inside the Chapel.
8. All trash is to be placed in proper containers.
9. No food or drink is allowed in the chapel.
10. The Chapel does not have a bridal room. The sacristy or vestibule may not, under any circumstances, be used as a dressing room.
11. Photos and video taken during the ceremony must be done from appropriate and discreet vantage points and not from the main altar area. Photographers/videographers are not allowed in the sanctuary. Videotaping that requires additional lighting or wiring is not permitted. Please share these guidelines with your photographer/videographer.
12. There is a parking lot adjacent to the Chapel that is sufficient for guests attending weekend weddings. There are designated handicapped spots as well. A space directly outside the Chapel in the street is available for one limousine.
13. For safety reasons, we cannot allow rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, potpourri, pennies, balloons, etc. to be thrown inside or outside of the chapel. Bubbles or bells are permitted outside of the chapel.
14. There are no spaces on campus that can be used for a reception.

We appreciate the couple's awareness that the wedding is essentially a religious ceremony, representing a holy and blessed moment in their lives. Please complete the last page of this document (p. 5), affix your signatures, and return the document with the Chapel fee no later than two months before the wedding.



CAMPUS MINISTRIES

# CHAPEL RESERVATION AGREEMENT

FOR CATHOLIC MARRIAGES

*Madonna Della Strada Chapel / 415 Monroe Avenue / Scranton, Pennsylvania*

Please return this signed agreement and the Chapel fee to:

Michael O'Malley  
Director of Liturgy and Music  
Office of Campus Ministries TDC 200  
The University of Scranton  
800 Linden Street  
Scranton, PA 18510

By signing this form, we hereby accept and agree to the terms and conditions set forth by The University of Scranton's Office of Campus Ministries, as outlined in the "Wedding Planning Guide." We also agree to indemnify and hold harmless The University of Scranton and its Jesuit Community from and against all losses, damages, and liabilities arising directly from our failure or the failure of our guests to abide by the terms and conditions in the "Wedding Planning Guide" as given to us by the Office of Campus Ministries.

Bride's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*We recognize and affirm the important step you are about to take in this Sacrament of Marriage.*

*It is our honor and privilege to journey with you.*

*Please know the University community will be praying with and for you in the coming months!*